

## **SR-12 Context Sensitive Committee Meeting Summary**

The SR-12 Project Team and the members of the Context Sensitive Committee held a meeting on February 23, 2005 from 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. in Escalante, Utah.

### **Facilitators:**

Kim Clark, H.W. Lochner  
Michelle Fishburne, H.W. Lochner

### **Project Team Members:**

Tyler Robirds, H.W. Lochner  
Randi Shover, H.W. Lochner  
HG Kunzler, H.W. Lochner  
Amber Cypers, H.W. Lochner  
Tod Wadsworth, Wadsworth Design Group

The following is a summary of the meeting (all italicized items were included on the original agenda) (all items mentioned that need to be addressed at future dates and meetings were clustered in a "parking lot" to be revisited at a later date. Those items are listed at the end of this summary):

### *1. Welcome*

- Tyler Robirds of H.W. Lochner (Lochner) welcomed the attendees. Mr. Robirds gave a brief overview of Lochner and its role on this project. He also stated that the project team's goal for this project is to seek a balanced solution. He then introduced the meeting facilitators, Kim Clark and Michelle Fishburne, and turned the time over to them.
- *Review Agenda and Logistics*
  - Kim Clark and Michelle Fishburne welcomed the committee members and thanked them for taking the time to attend. They let the committee members know that the purpose of the meeting was to define the "context" of SR-12. They then proceeded to review the day's agenda.

### *2. Committee Member Introductions*

- Committee members each gave a brief introduction as to who they are, who they represent, and what their vision of the corridor is. Members from the following organizations/communities were represented:
  - Ranching Community
  - Bicycling Community
  - Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance
  - Wild Utah Project
  - Garfield County School District
  - Garfield County Travel Council
  - Garfield County
  - Boulder Town Council
  - Escalante City Council
  - Escalante/Boulder Chamber of Commerce
  - Utah Department of Transportation

- Federal Highway Administration
- US Bureau of Land Management

3. *Project Background Discussion*

- *Previous Documents*

- In 1973, a study was conducted called *The Escalante River Basin: Problems and Issues*. Wild Utah Project provided a copy of the study.
- In 2000, the Utah Department of Transportation conducted the *SR-12 and SR-63 Corridor Transportation Plan*. Rick Torgerson with UDOT gave an overview of the study.
  - The plan was done for the entire SR-12 corridor and a small stretch of SR-63.
  - The *SR-12 and SR-63 Corridor Transportation Plan* included an extensive public involvement program that included public comments and public hearings.
  - The document in its entirety is on the project web site in the following location under *SR-12 and SR-63 Corridor Transportation Plan*:  
<http://www.udot.utah.gov/sr-12/public.htm>
- In 1996, the Grand Staircase Escalante National Monument was formed and the *Grand Staircase Escalante National Monument Management Plan* was published. Allysia Angus with BLM spoke briefly about this study.
  - In the *Grand Staircase Escalante National Monument Management Plan* SR-12 is referred to as a “special recreation management area” and the WSA’s were addressed.
  - The project study for safety improvements along SR-12 is consistent with the Management Plan.
  - The document is available in its entirety on the project web site in the following location under *Grand Staircase Escalante National Monument Management Plan*:  
<http://www.udot.utah.gov/sr-12/public.htm>.
- In 2001, the *Scenic Byway 12 Corridor Management Plan* was conducted by the Five County Association of Governments on behalf of Wayne and Garfield Counties. Allysia Angus with BLM and the Scenic Byway 12 Committee spoke briefly about this study.
  - In this study, Scenic Byway and All-American Road status were sought and obtained.
  - Safety is a big issue covered in the *Scenic Byway 12 Corridor Management Plan*. The goal of the management plan is to make sure SR-12 accommodates all the different modes of transportation.
  - The document is available in its entirety on the project web site in the following location under *Scenic Byway 12 Corridor Management Plan*:  
<http://www.udot.utah.gov/sr-12/public.htm>.

- *Current Studies*

- Comments made on previous and current studies:
  - An interpretive signing plan is being prepared for the BLM. The study is being conducted by a consultant and will be complete by June 2005.
  - The SR-12 document that is being prepared now is not a planning study like the ones previously conducted. This study is in a scoping phase that will lead to implementing changes that need to take place.
  - Two other aspects that need to be taken into consideration on this project: utility usage of the road and right-of-way issues.

- Cattle issues also need to be taken into consideration. What is “open range?” Who has jurisdiction over the road for open range issues?
  - UDOT and FHWA have jurisdiction over the road for transportation issues. Land management issues such as cattle and open range fall under BLM’s jurisdiction.

4. *Project Process / National Environmental Policy Act Discussion*

- Who is the lead agency on this project?
  - Michelle Fishburne: The Federal Highway Administration is the lead agency and the US Bureau of Land Management is a cooperating agency.
- NEPA, the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, is the process by which this study will be conducted. The NEPA process is as follows:
  - Early agency and public coordination.
  - Draft Purpose & Need identification.
  - Preliminary inventory of affected environment.
  - Identify and evaluate conceptual alternatives.
  - Assess potential impacts.
  - Select and prepare NEPA document (EA vs. EIS)
  - Decision
- In order to provide quality and informed decision for the project, the agency and public involvement process will run parallel to the NEPA process to ensure all input is taken into consideration and reviewed by the agencies and the public. Currently the project is in the “early coordination” stage and includes the development of the Context Sensitive Committee to focus on the project area needs and potential solutions.

5. *Context Sensitive Solutions Discussion*

- The goal of this first meeting was to define context. What is context?
  - Context is the circumstances in which an event occurs; a setting.
  - What goes into a setting?
    - Physical area
    - Natural environment
    - Community values
    - Historical events
    - Cultural characteristics
    - Economics
- Additional comments made:
  - What are the logical termini for this project? (the project extents)
    - Kim Clark: Hell’s Backbone Road in Escalante to the Burr Trail turn-off in Boulder. At this time, the logical termini will not go through the towns.
  - Pull-offs will be essential to the highway and need to be assessed.

6. *Exercise: Define Project Area Context*

- Kim Clark and Michelle Fishburne asked the committee to brainstorm as individuals and come up with a description of SR-12 and its surroundings for someone that had never driven or seen the road. They then split the committee up into groups of two to discuss

and then present what they had described. The descriptions were written on post-it notes and placed on a large board. The descriptions were are follows:

- Great views, slick rock canyon, hike – get out of the damn car!, wild and quiet, cool small road, great motorcycling road, great driving road, dangerous road
- Incredible scenery, you can see for miles, long distance views – on a clear day you can see forever, clear night skies, evidence of history and pre-history, very windy, slow driving, evokes passion
- Highway 12 is scenic and diverse, primitive, emotional experience, history, tourism, attractions, awe, excitement and fear, safety and commuters
- Pioneer history, changes through the years, quality of light – the colors, distant views, memorable drive, winding, steep, narrow roads, beautiful, Hogsback, canyons and mountains, self-reliance
- Scenic, unique – no other place like it, historic, exhilarating and spooky, well paved, many turns, “it’s a hell of a place to loose a cow” –*Ebenezer Bryce*
- Home, history, solitude on a horse, this is a place that is a symphony of sky, stone, and water
- Additional words committee members used to describe the SR-12 area that Kim and Michelle posted on the large board:
  - Quiet
  - Views
  - Hiking
  - Commuters
  - “Coombs Site”
  - Ranch History
  - Big area – walking perspective
  - History
  - Primitive areas
  - Experiences
  - Unique history
  - Tribal culture
  - Creamery route
  - Scenic
  - Beautiful
  - Canyons
  - Museum
  - State Parks
  - Country solitude
  - Geological value
  - Water
  - See so . . . far
  - Tourism
  - Petroglyphs
  - Great driving
  - Mountains
  - Road to get there
  - Anasazi history

- Emotional experience
- Mule trails
- Slow
- Speechless – driving at night
- Dangerous – severity of accidents
- Has everything
- Walk to experience
- Not as many conveniences
- Ranchers
- Big
- Awe
- More than a road
- Campgrounds
- Points of interest
- Archaeology
- No people
- Cultural values

7. *Existing Road Conditions Discussion*

- HG Kunzler and Amber Cypers of H.W. Lochner gave the committee an overview of the existing road conditions. They also discussed the fourteen critical review elements that are utilized when a road is studied.
  - Fourteen critical review elements:
    - Posted speed
    - Travel lane widths
    - Shoulder widths
    - Horizontal alignments (curves on roadway)
    - Vertical alignments (crests and valleys on roadway)
    - Grade of roadway (how steep is the roadway)
    - Sight distance (how far ahead of me can I see)
    - Cross section (slope on the side of the roadway, obstructions close to roadway)
    - Superelevation (how steep is the bank on a curve)
    - Structural capacity (structural rating of bridge)
    - Vertical clearance (overhead obstructions)
    - Bridge width
    - Crash data
    - Pavement conditions
  - SR-12 existing conditions:
    - Posted speed: Ranges from 30-60 mph. Warning signs 20-40 mph.
    - Travel lane widths: Generally 11-12 ft.
    - Shoulder widths: Range from 0-10 ft. (Generally 2-3 ft.)
    - Horizontal alignments (curves on roadway): 97 horizontal curves. Curves speed range from 20-75 mph.
    - Vertical alignments (crests and valleys on roadway): 90 vertical curves. Curves speed range from 30-80 mph.

- Grade of roadway (how steep is the roadway): Range from 0.06-14.38% (Generally 6-8%)
- Sight distance (how far ahead of me can I see): Horizontal sight distance – 16 of 97 curves have horizontal sight distance less than 30 mph.
- Cross section (slope on the side of the roadway, obstructions close to roadway): Maps identify location of slopes 3:1 or steeper. (A 3:1 slope does not allow a car to recover if it goes over it. The car will either go to the bottom of the slope of roll.) Guardrail/Barrier does not have proper end treatments.
- Superelevation (how steep is the bank on a curve): Ranges from 2-8%. Super does not extend through entire curve.
- Structural capacity (structural rating of bridge): Escalante River Bridge – Rating 84.3 = Good Condition; Calf Creek Bridge – Rating 58 = Deteriorated; Boulder Creek Bridge – 82.9 = Good Condition.
- Vertical clearance (overhead obstructions): Appears adequate.
- Bridge width: Calf Creek and Boulder Creek have obstructions within the clear zone.
- Crash data: 81 total crashes from 1994 and 2003.
- Pavement conditions: Sub-grade is mostly strong. Pavement is in poor condition – previous report recommends rehabilitation. Near RP 75.3 guardrail/metal pipes is supporting pavement.
- Comments regarding existing road conditions:
  - How many accidents have been on the Hogsback? Amber Cypers: 5 in the last 9 years.

8. *Exercise: Project Area Conditions and Concerns*

- Kim Clark and Michelle Fishburne divided the committee into three groups of four people. Each group was given a map of the project area and GIS data. The groups were asked to write their concerns on the maps in the corresponding locations.
- The concerns are as follows:
  - Group 1: High speed pedestrian issue near high school, passing zones in certain areas (**see exact locations on PDF maps under Group 1**), widen road for bicycles, intersection improvements near Hole-in-the-Rock, pullouts/short passing zones in certain areas (exact locations on maps), issue of speed at Boynton Overlook, turn lane to Kiva Koffee House, possible rumble strips before sharp turns to slow drivers down, short RV passing lanes in certain areas (exact locations on maps), straighten curves in certain areas (exact locations on maps), aesthetic retaining walls, bicycle pullouts in certain areas (exact locations on maps), upgrade intersection to Calf Creek, more appropriate replacement to Jersey barrier, improve all overlooks, Hogsback safety options.
  - Group 2: (Wrote concerns on flip chart instead of map. **See PDF of map for Groups 2 and 3 for a copy of flip chart.**) Pullouts for hikers, parking for recreational purposes, safe passage for cyclists, fix Calf Creek Bridge, fix where pipes and barriers are supporting the road, creative and effective deterrents to speeding, address cattle/wildlife crashes, sort out the right-of-way, possible rumble strips.

- Group 3: Crosswalks at high school, be aware of WSA boundaries, need for passing lane at certain points (**see exact locations on PDF maps for Groups 2 and 3**), turn lane into Kiva Koffee House, sight distance limited in certain areas (exact locations on maps), straighten curves at certain points (exact location on maps), icy in certain spots (exact locations on maps), retaining walls near Calf Creek and Escalante River, falling rock near Calf Creek, possibility of slope falling into Calf Creek Campground, increase superelevation (banking) in certain areas (exact locations on maps), natural waterfalls coming off cliffs – don't rock cut (exact locations on maps), cows on the Hogsback November through February, possible rest stop near the Hogsback – provide information about the roadway and slowing down, deer in open range near the Hogsback and the turnoff to Hell's Backbone, signage for slowing down (exact locations on maps).

9. *Next Meeting*

- *Project Vision*
  - *Evaluation Criteria*
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Additional Ideas

- Rumble strips
- Utilize the old road as a bike trail
- Parking options and hiking access
- Signing: speed concerns/additional research
- Right-of-way
- Education: bicycle uses
- Flattening vertical curves
- Pullouts

Parking Lot Items

- Future Utilities
- Changing the lanes through the town of Escalante from four lanes to two lanes.
  - Rick Torgerson: If there isn't a capacity issue, then changing the number of lanes through town is a matter of restriping the lanes and the town can make that request to UDOT.
- Defining road user etiquette is an important aspect of this project.
- Evaluation of accidents: social vs. physical road conditions
- Transportation projects.
- Garfield County tourism, crosswalk near Escalante High School.
- Management of cattle – legal issue of open range.
  - BLM vs. UDOT